

# Orem to study paramedic plan

**By Michael Morris**  
Deseret News staff writer

OREM — Utah law requires that two paramedics be aboard every ambulance responding to an emergency call. Orem City believes it is more efficient to operate ambulances with one paramedic and an emergency medical technician. A second paramedic — a cross-trained police officer — arrives about the same time in a separate vehicle.

A study of Orem's plan has been recommended by the state's Paramedic Advisory Committee.

Orem used the paramedic/EMT system until last July, when the state Emergency Medical Services Committee insisted that Orem comply with the law, ruling that the

waiver under which the city had operated for a number of years had given Orem ample time to come into compliance.

Orem has since complied with the state law. But Orem Department of Public Safety officials met last December with EMS committee representatives, requesting a different interpretation of the two-paramedic law, and requesting that a state regulation be changed so the city's Public Safety Department could conduct a study of its emergency medical services and have a chance to prove the viability of the Orem system.

The Paramedic Advisory Committee rejected a preliminary study earlier this year, but this week approved plans for a more comprehensive study that incorporates suggestions given to the city by the paramedic

committee.

Orem officials will present the study proposal to the state's Emergency Medical Services Committee on July 1. If the EMS committee approves, Orem will have a year to conduct the study.

By adopting its cross-training program, which trains firefighters and police officers in all police, fire and emergency medical functions, city officials believe they can make more effective use of current manpower and save taxpayers dollars by reducing the number of emergency personnel needed by the city. Currently, there are three paramedics in the fire division also trained and certified as police officers.

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el in many places.

Payson also got its share of slides.

"We can see 27 new slides this year from  
ad," he said.

rically, Watkins said one of the most  
lt things this year was simply waiting  
e floods.

"I knew it (the flooding) was coming,  
last year's surprise. We got ulcers  
ing the high snow level and waiting for  
ome."

Councilman Steve Hansen agreed  
e flooding this year was worse. "I took  
up the canyon and it scared me when I  
ow high the muddy water line was on  
ees. It really was an emergency. I be-  
however, that the efforts of Rod (Wat-  
city workers and volunteers prevented  
or disaster."

"We had tremendously dedicated people  
ed in protecting Payson City, working  
hours. Rod and city workers many  
put in 20 to 22 hours at a stretch," said  
Gary D. Tassainer.

alarms that sounded in Orem during  
1983, 1,126 were false — costing the city  
\$14,000 and wasting 628 man-hours to re-  
spond to them.

Those figures, which are being repeat-  
ed this year — only six of 427 alarms to  
date have proved valid — have prompted  
Orem officials to revise a chapter in  
the city code so that alarm users will be  
required to post a cash bond after their  
second false alarm within any six-month  
period.

Paul Johnson, assistant city attorney,  
said the city will use the bond to try to  
ensure that no additional false alarms  
occur at the same place during the six  
months after a first false alarm. If no  
additional false alarms occur during the  
six months, the \$50 bond will be  
returned.

Johnson said, however, that if addi-  
tional false alarms occur during the six-

Mosher said about 65 percent of the  
false alarms were a result of employee  
error, while the remaining 35 percent  
were due to mechanical failure. He said  
he believes alarm users can correct the  
problem because some premises with  
alarm systems never have false alarm  
problems.

"I think there are a lot of alarms in the  
community that need to be updated,"  
said Ted Peacock, public safety director.

"We think that it's (code revision) pret-  
ty reasonable," said Johnson. "Nonethe-  
less, they're (alarm users) going to be  
dinged enough to get the right equipment  
and to get their people properly trained."

According to the revision, exceptions  
to the new ruling include the sounding of  
false alarms related or resulting from a  
power failure, phone lines being severed  
or from water surges through a fire  
alarm system.

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